

Five Schools Announced as Winners in Rocky Mountain Environmental Challenge

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Schools presented innovative ideas that address natural hazard risks in Colorado

DENVER – Today, Earth Force and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced the winners of the 2020 Rocky Mountain Environmental Challenge (RMEC). Winners include teams from schools in Fort Collins, Estes Park and Milliken, Colorado.

- **First Place** – Blevins Middle School (Fort Collins) seventh and eighth grade students who proposed a community awareness event to encourage students and their families to create family emergency plans.
- **Second Place** – Estes Park Middle School sixth grade students who developed a community awareness and grassroots mitigation campaign to address fire risks in their community.
- **Third Place** – Mountain Sage Community School (Fort Collins) sixth and seventh grader students who developed an emergency preparedness plan for the school in case of a blizzard or flood.
- **Fourth Place** – Compass Community Collaborative School (Fort Collins) middle and high school students who developed a proposal to organize a community flood awareness and preparedness event at the Poudre Valley Mobile Home Park.
- **Fifth Place** – Knowledge Quest Academy (Milliken) students who created a plan to design and install park shelters and bus stops to keep residents safe during a storm event.

The RMEC is an annual competition sponsored by Earth Force and FEMA that combines project-based learning with the latest research in STEM education. Student teams from schools across the state submit a project that applies real-life solutions to local natural hazard risks in their community for a chance to win prize money to fund their project. Prizes range from \$1,000 for the first place winner to



\$200 for the fifth place finalist. All prize money was donated by the Association of State Floodplain Managers Foundation to further its dedication to reducing the risk and impacts of floods on people and communities.

“We’ve helped educators for more than 25 years develop programming that engages students in STEM skills while connecting them to the local community,” said Vince Meldrum, President and CEO of Earth Force. “This year, we’re so impressed by the submissions we received for the RMEC and proud that the next generation has the critical thinking skills and citizenship to solve real issues here in Colorado.”

“FEMA is proud to support the Rocky Mountain Environmental Challenge and local students as they create solutions to risks and hazards that Coloradans face every day,” said Tony Mendes, Senior Emergency Management Specialist of FEMA Region 8. “Natural hazards can happen at any time. We’re excited to see the finalists follow through with their projects as we work together to mitigate those risks and minimize the hazard threats to our communities.”

The RMEC also includes professional development opportunities at no-cost for participating teachers and culminates in a summit for all schools where the official winners will be announced. The summit, originally planned for May 7, 2020, has been postponed until later this year due to COVID-19, and Earth Force and FEMA are looking for alternative ways to celebrate the students’ hard work.

For more information about the Rocky Mountain Environmental Challenge and the final projects, please visit www.earthforce.org/rmec.

